



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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**President of the European Council  
Herman Van Rompuy  
on next European Council meeting  
and the Multiannual Financial Framework**

The new year has started on a note of hope. The economic and social situation in Europe remains - of course - at the very top of the European agenda. But I am confident that the worst of the crisis of the euro zone is now behind us. Restoring stability is a prelude for economic recovery and more jobs in 2013-2014. We will work hard on this.

I have called the first meeting of the European Council this year on 7 and 8 February. It will be another important summit. And with important decisions to take.

We will need to agree on the budget for our Union. Or to put it simply: We need to make sure that the Union has the money to fulfil its tasks. From now until the end of this decade.

This budget will be a budget of moderation - also reflecting the constraints on public finances at national level. Therefore it must also ensure better value for money. And we must not forget that it is the budget for the next seven years!

It must be future-oriented. It must focus on jobs and growth in all regions all over the Union, in different economic sectors, and on research and investments. And at the same time ensuring that our Union can continue to deliver the actions our citizens have come to expect.

To agree on the budget, we all - and I stress the word "all" - need to compromise. No single Member State can have all its wishes fulfilled - just like in national budget talks within coalitions.

**P R E S S**

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But reaching an agreement is important for every country - and for all our European institutions including the European Parliament, keeping in mind the new decision-making procedures with the Lisbon Treaty. We can and must all work towards the greater good of our Union. We must agree on the budget for the rest of the decade. For the benefit of all of us.

At the February European Council, we will also discuss other important issues related to our relations with the rest of the world. In particular,

- how to improve further our engagement with the countries of the Southern neighbourhood two years after the beginning of the Arab spring and the rise of democracy in many countries;
- how to improve our trade relations with EU's strategic partners - especially with the United States
- and finally, Mali will be on our agenda.

Our recent decision to launch an EU mission to train and advice the Malian army; our support to the African-led mission to Mali against terrorists; and the swift response of France and other EU members to Mali's request for aid - all bear testimony to Europe's global role and responsibilities.

So, as you can see. Another busy and important year has started for the European Union.

[watch the video](#)

